



Operation Fuel, Inc.

WE'RE ALL PART OF THE OPERATION.

One Regency Drive
Suite 200
Bloomfield, CT 06002
(860) 243-2345
(860) 726-9310
www.operationfuel.org

February 20, 2013

Good afternoon chairs and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Patricia Wrice, executive director of Operation Fuel. I want to thank the Governor and the Appropriations Committee for awarding Operation Fuel \$1.2 million to provide emergency energy assistance to Connecticut's vulnerable families and seniors. In addition, I want to thank both the Appropriations Committee and the Chairs of the Regulation and Protection Subcommittee for the allocation of \$2 million from the systems benefit charge last year. Also, on behalf of Operation Fuel, Operation Fuel's supports the Governor's budget that allocates \$1.1million to Operation Fuel.

Operation Fuel is a private statewide non-profit organization that provides emergency energy assistance to low-income working households that are not eligible or have exhausted their benefits from the state energy programs. Operation Fuel is also a member of the Governor's Low Income Energy Advisory Board. This year Operation Fuel has committed over \$2.3 million in energy assistance to more 5,000 families and seniors. We have exhausted the \$1.1 million allocated to Operation Fuel by the State of Connecticut. Our applications are coming in at about 150 per day. These are households who either don't qualify for State energy assistance or have exhausted their benefits. Operation Fuel provides a maximum of \$500 per household which only gives a family a little over 100 gals of fuel.

Operation Fuel utilizes a network of more than 100 fuel banks across the state to serve low-income households. We work very closely with the Community Action Agencies to help ensure families are utilizing the State Program before coming to Operation Fuel. Most of the CAAS are local fuel bank sites.

We all know that energy costs in Connecticut continue to be among the highest in the nation, and they continue to increase at a rate that far outpaces families' abilities to keep up. The gap between what households can afford to pay and their actual energy costs continues to widen as the cost of energy increases. In 2012 the energy affordability gap for families at or below 200% of poverty totaled \$661,629,908. This averaged out to \$2,304 per household. As a result, more families are at risk of having to make choices between adequate nutrition, medical care, housing, and other basic necessities in order to pay home energy bills.

Thank you for your time today. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.